IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraphs **[0043]** and **[0049]** to read as follows:

[0043] In an even more preferred embodiment, the synthetic platelet storage medium may include approximately 70-90 mM sodium chloride, approximately 8-12 mM sodium citrate, approximately 25-35 mM sodium acetate and approximately ~~22-5 mM~~ 22-35 mM sodium phosphate (which can be a combination of various protonated sodium phosphate species, such as dibasic sodium phosphate and monobasic sodium phosphate. The pH of such solution is a approximately 7.0-7.4 and preferably, approximately 7.2. Most preferred is a synthetic storage medium that has any pH of approximately 7.2 and the formulation set forth in Table 1 below.

[0049] Turning now to the method of preparing a treatment-ready blood product such as platelets in accordance with the present invention, interim container 12 of container system 10 is adapted for attachment to a source of collected platelets 26 (~~Fig. 4~~ Fig. 5). Source container 26 may be attached to the interim container 12 by joining tubings 22 and 27 in a sterile manner. Methods and systems for joining tubing in, preferably, a sterile manner are well known in the field of blood processing. One particularly useful system for attaching the tubings of interim container 12 and source container 26 is the Terumo SCD 312 sterile connection device generally described in

U.S. Patent No. 5,802,689, which is incorporated by reference herein. Other possible means for sterile connection will also be known and recognized by those of ordinary skill in the art. In any event, once the sterile connection is made, source platelets from source container 26 are transferred to interim container 12.